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ABSTRACT

A knowledge base to guide the development of educational leadership programs is suggested in this report. The first part reviews sources of the educational leadership knowledge base, which include the traditional sources of school administrator experience and statutory specification, and recent sources, such as research on administrator induction and administrator education reform proposals. The second part describes the educational leadership program at the University of Northern Colorado, which is based on a holistic set of integrated learning experiences and collaborative teaching. Course content is described. (22 references) (LMI)

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A KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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A KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Recent literature suggests some important recurring themes found in effective schools. Among those frequently cited are: (a) a strong sense of mission, (b) strong leadership, (c) high expectations for students and teachers, (d) a focus on specific instructional goals, (e) sufficient opportunities for learning, (f) parent and community involvement, and (g) a positive learning environment (Evans, 1982). Of these conditions related to effective schools, the one that has achieved a central role in the literature is the importance of leadership. Many researchers (Austin, 1979; Edmonds, 1980; Lipham, 1981; Goodlad, 1985) indicate that the behavior of educational leaders is the single most important factor supporting high quality programs in schools.

Based on this view of educational leadership serving as a critical factor for more effective education for children, then, the issue becomes one of identifying strategies that may be used to improve the quality of experiences available to prepare future school leaders for their important roles. In this paper, a knowledge base to guide the development of such strategies is suggested. That knowledge base is derived from multiple sources which will be reviewed briefly. Finally, the linkage between the identified knowledge base and the newly-

developed program in Educational Leadership at the University of Northern Colorado will be described.

Traditional Sources for the Knowledge Base

One of the first issues that must be recognized in the pursuit of a knowledge base regarding the preparation of school leaders is that, in general, the formal field of educational leadership in this country is relatively new. It has been less than one hundred years since the position of a formally-prepared school administrator became a normal part of school life in most systems across the nation. The earliest views of the school administrator consisted of one of the teaching staff taking on some additional management duties from time-to-time. As schools (and American society) grew in complexity, this role of a part-time "principal teacher" changed to become a full-time school administrator. By the beginning of the 20th Century, the word "teacher" had been dropped from the title of most leadership positions in schools. Nonetheless, it was considerably easier to identify the relevant knowledge base for educational leaders less than one hundred years ago. The person "in charge" got there primarily because he (and almost always <u>he</u>) had more seniority than any other teacher, and was generally viewed as a master teacher above all.

As schools systems and individual schools increased in number and size, the vision of the school administrator became recognized more

as a formal role separated from the world of classrooms. There was a professionalization of leadership which resulted in the widespread recognition of roles such as principal and superintendent. This created a situation wherein it was no longer a simple task to identify the role (and supporting knowledge base) simply in terms of instruction and teaching. Instead, school administrators were people who had "other duties" than teachers. But what were these duties? And more importantly, what are the implications of these new duties as they might relate to the development of an understanding of an appropriate knowledge base to guide the development of the next generations of school administrators?

Answers to these last questions have at least two different historical sources. One of these is traditional reliance on the sharing of craft knowledge about the field of educational administration. Here, the determination of what should be learned about the leadership of schools was based primarily on those with experience in administrative roles telling those who aspire to similar roles what is needed "in the real world." While this perspective allowed individuals to gain important insights on practice based on accurate sources of information, it has a major limitation. Specifically, the problem with learning by hearing about the practice of others alone does not guarantee effective performance. Simply stated, those with experience may have unsuccessful experience to share. Further, learning by watching veterans may prepare people to cope with the problems faced

in the past, but not necessarily to be able to deal with future issues. The preferred instructional strategy used to deliver this knowledge base has been the apprenticeship model, or as the British would say, "Learning at 'Nellie's elbow'" (Daresh, 1989).

A second traditional source used in determining the content of the knowledge base in educational administration has been through statutory specification. What is shared with those interested in school leadership tends to be dictated largely by the requirements of certification agencies, usually in state departments of education. In this perspective, the knowledge base for leadership is comprised largely of a set of specific competencies related to the regulatory agency's vision of what effective educational management shall appear to be. This approach offers the advantage of simplicity in determining what shall be taught and what shall be learned. As a result, universities (the institutions traditionally charged with the responsibility of preparing educational leaders) are able to have a rather clear understanding of what to teach; course content is related to the stated competencies of the state so that students may be properly "certified" as leaders. Clearly, the great limitation to this approach to the determination of a knowledge base is that it is dependent almost exclusively on the concept of leadership that has been envisioned by the state. And that vision may be limited by too great a reliance on narrow definitions of how to manage schools by maintaining the status quo in schools, rather than attempting to facilitate

change and engage in leadership. The conventional instructional strategy used in conjunction with this concept of a valid knowledge base is the university graduate level course. Typically, each competency domain required by the state is addressed by a different course.

Emergent Sources

These first two approaches to learning and teaching about educational administration continue to serve as powerful determinants of the knowledge base for the field. However, there are now emerging additional sources that have been instrumental in guiding the development of the Educational Leadership Program at the University of Northern Colorado. These two sources are research related to the needs of beginning school administrators, and proposals related to the reform of educational administration preparation in the United States.

The issue of what shall be taught in the field of school leadership may be defined by the research recently conducted concerning beginning school principals and other administrators. Among some of the more recent investigations have been small-scale studies conducted in Great Britain by Nockels (1981) and Turner (1981), and doctoral research in the United States by Marrion (1983), Sussman (1985), and Diederich (1988). A common finding in these works, and also in the study by Duke (1984), has typified the beginning year of the school principalship as full of great frustration and anxiety.

Another recent study of a much wider scale was the work by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) by Weindling and Earley (1987). This ambitious work reviewed the characteristics of the first years of secondary head teachers throughout the United Kingdom. Interviews were conducted of beginning principals, their teaching staffs, and their administrative superiors to determine the ways in which principals achieved success in their positions, along with the nature of frustrations felt by the novice administrators. The study examined such issues as the paths typically followed to the principalship, preparation programs, district support mechanisms, and relationships existing between the heads of schools and their management teams. Among the recommendations coming from this study was that beginning principals need to receive special consideration and support from employing school systems if they are to achieve any great success. Weindling and Earley noted that a major problem for heads has been isolation from peers.

In another study of beginning principals, Daresh (1986) interviewed elementary and secondary principals in Ohio to determine their perceptions regarding problems faced on the job. He found concerns in three major areas: (a) problems with role clarification (understanding who they were, now that they were principals, and how they were supposed to use their new authority); (b) limitations on technical expertise (how do they do the things that they are supposed to do?); and (c) difficulties with socialization to the profession and

individual school systems (learning how to do things in a particular setting--"learning the ropes").

Most studies of beginning administrators have tended to find a set of similar themes that have obvious implications for the ways in which the knowledge base in educational leadership may be defined. First, the issue of collegiality among school administrators deserves to be addressed as part of the preservice experience. Second, learning experiences must include ways for people to test some of their assumptions and beliefs concerning the nature of power, authority, leadership, and governance well before they they step into an administrative role for the first time.

The second source for a knowledge base in educational administration has been the large number of reform proposals which have recently appeared. Each has made recommendations related to the content and delivery of more effective programs for the preparation of school leaders. These have also had an impact on the design of the new program at the University of Northern Colorado.

Professional associations for practicing school administrators have proposed a number of changes to be made to strengthen the preservice preparation of educational leaders. For the most part, these modifications focus on the content of educational administration programs. As such, they serve as important determinants of a legitimate knowledge base. One example of a professional association and its recommended improvements in the content of the field is the work done by

the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1991). This group has suggested that the following three proficiency areas and related skills should serve as content for effective preparation programs:

1. Leadership Proficiencies
   - Leadership Behavior
   - Communication Skills
   - Group Processes
2. Supervisory Proficiencies
   - Curriculum
   - Instruction
   - Performance
   - Evaluation
3. Administrative/Management Proficiencies
   - Organizational Management
   - Fiscal Management
   - Political Management

Other sources of the knowledge base for educational leadership are derived from national reform efforts that have taken place in recent years. One of these, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988), focused its attention on the improvement of the delivery systems for educational administration preparation. Two recommendations deserve particular emphasis. First, the Report of the National Commission

suggested that greater attention be placed on discovering ways in which universities and local education agencies might collaborate more effectively in the preparation of educational leaders. The historic pattern of universities assuming total, or at least the major, control over the preservice instructional content, and the view that school systems are to be passive receivers of people trained according to this pattern is described as no longer valid. Preparing individuals for future administrative responsibilities has been described as something that needs to be mutually-shared by all those who would be identified as legitimate stakeholders in the development of educational leadership.

The second recommendation is that administrative preparation programs must include more opportunities for "clinical" approaches to learning as part of the normal ongoing activities of preservice training. The assumption that a period of "learning by doing" before a person moves into a professional role for the first time is alive and well in the field of educational administrator preparation, following the tradition of learning through the sharing of craft knowledge that was noted earlier in this paper.

The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), a consortium of 50 large doctoral-granting institutions, recently adopted an organizational Belief Statement (UCEA, 1989) which indicated that the knowledge base for the practice of educational administration should include the following content:

1. societal and cultural influences on schooling;
2. teaching and learning processes sensitive to individual differences;
3. theories of organization and organizational change;
4. methodologies of organizational studies and policy analysis;
5. leadership and management processes and functions;
6. policy studies including issues of law, politics, and economic dimensions of education;
7. moral and ethical dimensions of schooling in a pluralistic society.

The recommendations for a knowledge base in educational administration made by UCEA are consistent with those made by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989) which also examined the status of leadership training programs in the United States. The National Policy Board has attempted to go beyond the presentation of a recommended knowledge base by also proposing the desired relationships which should occur between the content espoused by preparation programs and the ongoing process of theory development in the field (Nicolaides & Gaynor, 1989), and also the ways in which the knowledge base should be related to the conceptual frameworks which might guide the delivery of that knowledge (Donaldson & Quaglia, 1989).

There have been other voices influential in the reform of educational leadership programs. Individual scholars have suggested ways

of modifying current thought regarding the appropriate knowledge base and related program design in the field. Murphy (1990) has avoided recommendation of specific course content that should serve as the basis for a knowledge base in administration. Instead, he has suggested a number of operating principles that should be examined as a way to frame the revision of curriculum in programs in the field:

1. A single core curricular program best serves the needs of students (as opposed to specialized programs).
2. The program should feature interdisciplinary exercises (as opposed to exposure to one discipline at a time).
3. The emphasis should be on depth of experiences (as opposed to content coverage).
4. Learners are best served through the use of original source documents (as opposed to textbooks).
5. The purpose of the curriculum is to help the student develop the capacity to learn (as opposed to accumulating information).
6. Teacher choice is a key to developing good curricular experiences (as opposed to prescribed learning sequences).
7. The curriculum should be constructed around problems of practice (as opposed to being based on academic disciplines).

One of the more important issues that Murphy has raised with this set of recommendations deals with the notion any articulation of the knowledge base for educational administration must necessarily involve

some degree of choice: Not everything that a school administrator must do might be thoroughly covered in every program. This perspective is contrary to one in many other reform proposals that suggest that those involved with leadership must be exposed to a range of content that is almost beyond the grasp of most individuals. A prevailing view has come to suggest that school administrators must be trained in and become experts in such diverse issues as law, finance, instruction, curriculum development, special education, counseling, human relations and interpersonal conflict resolution, and building management. Each of these topics warrants significant commitments of time and other resources on the part of the learner. Murphy's proposal suggests that it would be far better to identify a few crucial issues to learn a lot about, rather than attempting to learn a little about a lot.

A final set of recommendations and insights into the improvement of educational administrator preparationis found in the work of Charles Achilles, a frequent critic of the ways in which people are prepared to serve as school administrators. He has noted some severe limitations on most existing university-directed preparation programs (1988) which he notes are often ineffective because they are not:

1. ... taken in any particularly thoughtful sequence;
2. ... differentiated according to levels of administration (principalship or superintendency), or to varying degree levels (M.A., Specialist, or Ph.D./Ed.D.);

3. ... designed with some type of apparent conceptual framework;

4. ... developed with an underlying reliance on learning theory (or, in fact, any visible overarching theory base). This is particularly true with regard to any acknowledged reliance on adult learning theory;

5. ... closely aligned with desired outcomes, or coordinated with the work that administrators do ... or should do;

6. ... typically related to rigorous evaluation, either singly or for their contribution to the development of a vision driving a total administrator preparation program.

In summary, then, there appear to be a number of important potential sources for providing insights into the issue of the appropriate knowledge base for educational administration. History and tradition is one source, along with legislated mandates in the form of state licensure and certification requirements for administrators. More recently, the knowledge base has been influenced by research related to administrator induction and socialization, along with the recommendations of reform groups. This latter category includes professional associations, reform panels, and the independent observations of experts in the field. Finally, an important source for determining the knowledge base in the field comes at the local program level. In the final section of this paper, the blending of multiple sources is described as it relates to the local conceptualization of a sound

program in educational leadership preparation at the University of Northern Colorado.

Educational Leadership at the University of Northern Colorado

The University of Northern Colorado has recently transformed its traditional approach to administrative preparation from a reliance on completing a series of required courses to what the faculty believes is a more holistic effort which is more reflective of the knowledge base described earlier in this paper. The goal of the faculty has been to shift the preservice preparation of school leaders from a reliance on simply "collecting individual courses" in such traditional areas as school law, supervision, finance, school-community relations, and personnel to a set of integrated learning experiences which provide students with needed knowledge, skills, and attitudes (as defined by the multiple sources identified earlier) through a series of team-taught courses that emphasize more than the acquisition of pieces of knowledge that are attached to traditional courses.

The faculty began their developmental effort by deciding what ideas and values should be included as part of any learning experiences or courses that would comprise their new vision of educational leadership development. The following seven statements were identified as central value statements or themes that would permeate all

other activities of the leadership development program:

1. Learning, teaching, and collegiality are fundamental activities of educational organizations;
2. Moral and ethical imperatives drive leadership behavior;
3. Organizations are artifacts of a larger society;
4. Human growth and development are lifelong pursuits;
5. Validated knowledge and active inquiry form the basis of practice;
6. Leadership encompasses a learned set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes;
7. Leaders effect positive change in individuals and organizations.

These statements have been adopted as "non-negotiable" values by the program faculty, to the extent that all other courses and activities are expected in some tangible way to reflect these concepts. The next step for the faculty has been the development of a set of core learning experiences which, in total, lead students to a clear conceptualization of leadership and its component responsibilities in school settings. It has also been necessary to make certain that these learning experiences, or courses, address the stated requirements of the Colorado Department of Education, and also the best practices suggested by recent reform proposals. The result has been the creation of a core set of five integrated learning experiences that focus on Understanding Self, Shaping Organizations, Understanding People,

Understanding Environments, and Using Inquiry. A basic assumption in each of these learning experiences is that they are meant to serve the needs of individuals whose primary concern is preparation for an initial leadership role in schools. As a result, the research base on administrator induction and socialization has been addressed.

A brief description of the content in each of the five core experiences follows:

ELPS 601: Understanding Self: Developing a Personal Vision for Educational Leadership. The primary objective for this course is to enable students to develop an appreciation of their fundamental values and attitudes related to school governance, administration, and leadership. Considerable emphasis is placed on activities which will lead participants to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses, particularly as these characteristics may suggest that they will achieve success and personal fulfillment in the role of educational leaders.

ELPS 602: Using Inquiry: Framing Problems and Making Decisions in Educational Leadership. In this course, the primary issue considered deals with assisting students to develop an appreciation of alternative ways of knowing that are frequently used by school leaders, and how these alternative perspectives relate to leadership in organizations.

ELPS 603: Shaping Organizations: Management and Leadership in Education. This course features learning experiences designed to assist students develop an understanding of the basic structural components of educational organizations, along with the assumptions inherent in theoretical frameworks that describe organizational behavior. The relationship between the school and other organizations in society is also explored.

ELPS 604: Understanding People: Professional Development and Educational Leadership. This course provides an overview of fundamental issues related to the development of the personnel within educational organizations. Attention is directed toward entry level knowledge of issues such as staff appraisal and adult learning and development.

ELPS 605: Understanding Environments: Social, Political, Economic, and Legal Influences. This course includes information related to a basic knowledge of concepts and practices related to both the internal and external environments of educational organizations. Information is provided concerning entry level issues in the areas of school law, finance, and policy formation as characteristics of external environments. The development of curriculum and related policy in instructional improvement are issues considered as part of the analysis of the internal environment of the educational organization.

At least two more courses are required of all students, consistent not only with good practice, but also in terms of meeting the requirements of the Colorado Department of Education:

ELPS 606: Internship in Educational Administration. As the name implies, this learning experience allows a student to learn more about the actual functions and duties of practicing administrators at the level of school ing in which the student wishes to serve as an administrator in the future.

ELPS 607: Staff Evaluation Training. This course provides intensive instruction related to the practical skills needed to carry out effective teacher evaluation. It is required by the state for all administrative certificate holders.

Students are also expected to participate in a number of other courses beyond these core learning experiences. Each person must also select an appropriate seminar at a level of schooling in which a person is to serve as a leader. Also, students, must select from a variety of more traditional administrative courses in such areas as law, finance, supervision, and so forth to identify at least four electives which will assist them in learning in depth about some area of educational leadership that has particular relevance to their professional goals.

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